

# Firearm Registrations in Hawaii, 2018

Department of the Attorney General

• Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance Division

• [ag.hawaii.gov/cpja](http://ag.hawaii.gov/cpja)

Clare E. Connors, Attorney General

Julie Ebato, Administrator  
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*Prepared by  
Paul Perrone, Chief of Research and Statistics*

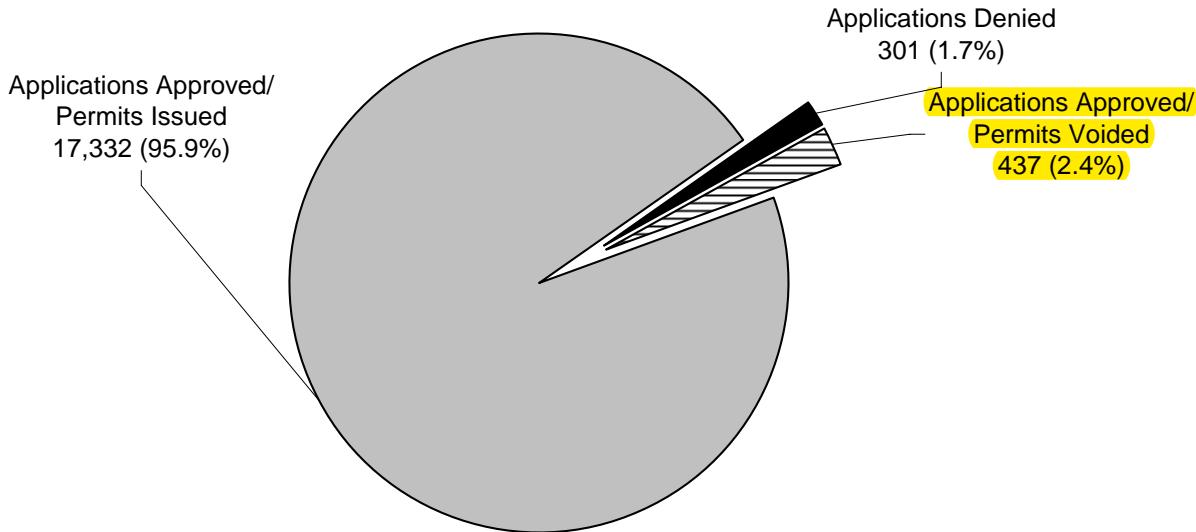
Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) § 134-14 requires the county police departments to provide to the Department of the Attorney General a monthly report of firearm registration activity. The data from these reports were compiled in order to provide the statistics presented herein for Calendar Year 2018. This is the nineteenth annual publication of *Firearm Registrations in Hawaii*.

## Permit Applications Processed, Issued, Voided, and Denied

A total of 18,070 personal/private firearm permit applications were processed statewide during 2018, marking a 9.9% increase from 16,443 applications processed in 2017. Of the applications processed in 2018, 95.9% were approved and resulted in issued permits; 2.4% were approved but subsequently voided after the applicants failed to return for their permits within the specified time period; and 1.7% were denied due to one or more disqualifying factors. Figure 1 provides additional information. Denials are described in greater detail throughout this report.

**Figure 1: Firearm Permit Application Outcomes,  
State of Hawaii, 2018**

18,070 Applications Processed



## Registrations and Importations

The 17,332 permits issued statewide in 2018 cover a total of 43,033 firearms registered throughout the year, resulting in a 5.9% increase from the 40,635 firearms registered during 2017. Just over half (21,960, or 51.0%) of the firearms registered during 2018 were imported from out-of-state, with the balance accounted for by transfers of firearms that were previously registered in Hawaii. Independent estimates made during the late-1990s by the Department of the Attorney General and the City and County of Honolulu Police Department conservatively placed the number of privately owned firearms in Hawaii at “at least one million.” Adding to that rough tally during the 2000 through 2018 period, a total of 604,290 firearms were registered (including some more than once, by different owners) and 298,937 were imported, but there is no way to track the number of firearms that permanently leave the state.

## Permits and Registrations, by Firearm Type

In the State of Hawaii, annual permits are issued in order to acquire an unlimited number of longarms (rifles and shotguns), while single-use permits are issued to acquire specific handguns. By firearm type, 51.6% (8,939) of the permits issued during 2018 were to acquire handguns, while 48.4% (8,393) were longarm permits. The tally of handgun permits is perennially confounded, however, as some of the county police departments issue a single permit listing all handguns that will be acquired simultaneously from the same source (i.e., one permit per transaction, per HRS § 134-2(e)), while the other departments issue one permit per handgun even if they are acquired in the same transaction.

Longarms accounted for 53.5% (23,029) of all firearms registered during 2018 (43,033). Broken out further, rifles and shotguns comprised 43.8% (18,840) and 9.7% (4,189) of total registrations, respectively. The remaining 46.5% (20,004) of firearms registered throughout 2018 were handguns.

## County Comparisons and Registration Trends

Table 1 shows the distribution of firearm registration activity during 2018 across the four counties and for the State of Hawaii overall.

**Table 1: Firearm Registration Activity,  
State of Hawaii and Counties, 2018**

	C&C of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Maui County	Kauai County	State Total
Applications Processed	11,237	3,544	2,014	1,275	<b>18,070</b>
Applications Approved/ Permits Issued	10,802	3,433	1,936	1,161	<b>17,332</b>
Applications Approved/ Permits Voided	269	19	54	95	<b>437</b>
Applications Denied	166	92	24	19	<b>301</b>
Denial Rate*	1.5%	2.6%	1.2%	1.5%	<b>1.7%</b>
Firearms Registered	26,282	8,537	5,316	2,898	<b>43,033</b>
Firearms Imported	14,124	4,184	2,269	1,383	<b>21,960</b>

\* The most comparable national figure is a 4.2% estimated average denial rate in 2015 for jurisdictions that require a buyer to obtain, after a local agency-conducted background check, a government-issued document that must be presented to a seller before the buyer can receive a firearm (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017).

As compared to Hawaii's resident population distribution, firearm registration activity occurred disproportionately across the four counties during 2018 (see Figure 2). (If the counties' registration activity occurred in equal proportion to their respective population sizes, then the three bars depicted for each county in Figure 2 would be of equal value.)

**Figure 2: County Distribution of Permit Applications Processed and Denied versus Resident Population Distribution, 2018**

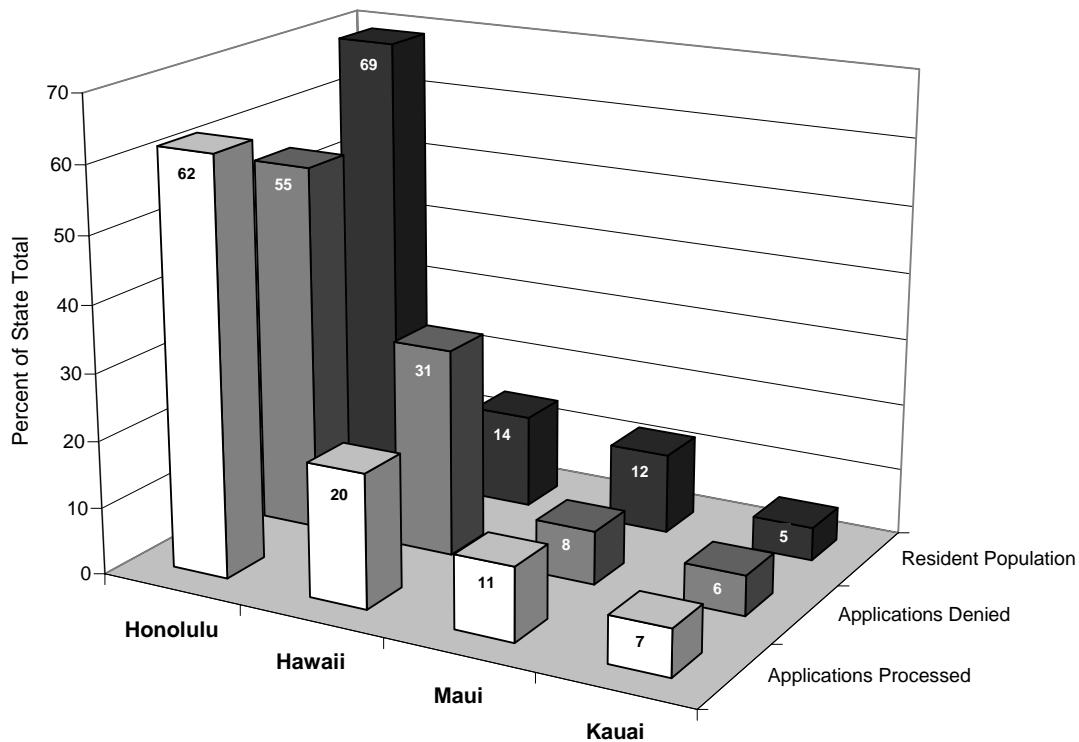
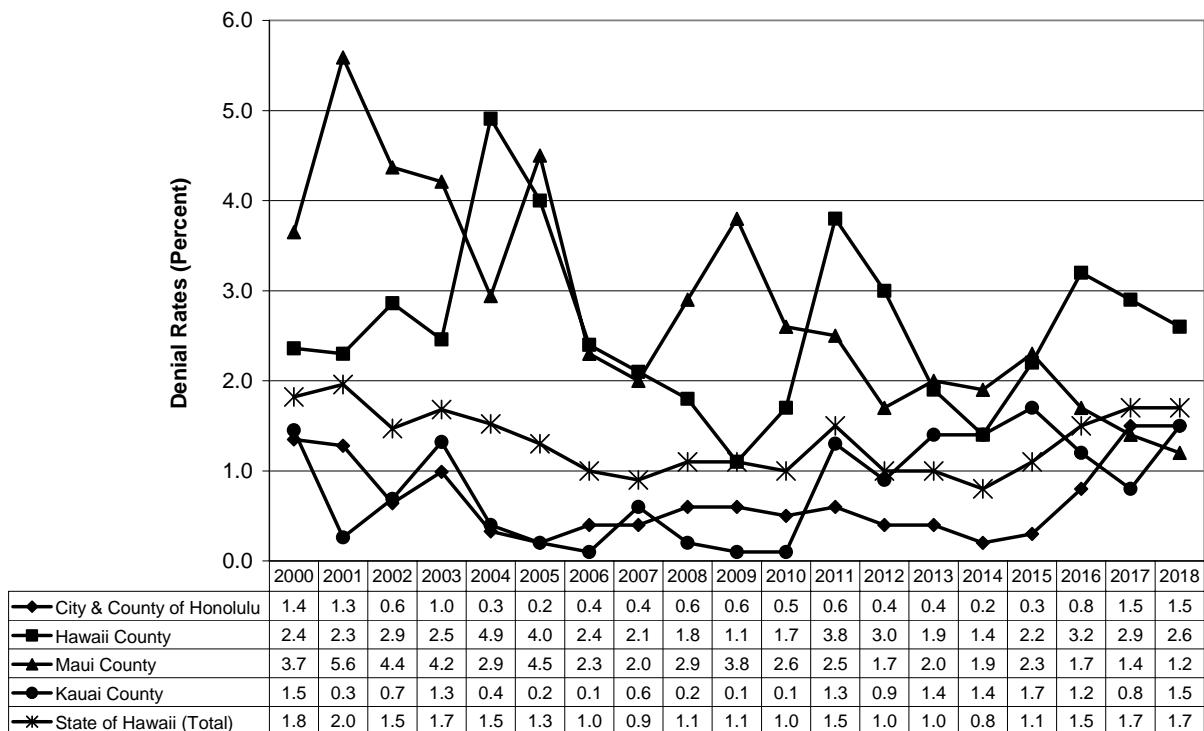


Figure 3 (next page) presents historical data on permit application denial rates for the State of Hawaii and each of the four counties.

**Figure 3: Firearm Permit Application Denial Rates,  
State of Hawaii and Counties, 2000-2018**



Firearm registration activity increased dramatically over the course of the 19 years for which these data have been systematically compiled and reported (see Figure 4). From 2000 through 2018, the number of statewide permit applications annually processed increased by 178.5%, the number of firearms annually registered leaped 216.0%, and the number of firearms annually imported rose 203.8%.

**Figure 4: Firearm Registration Trends,  
State of Hawaii, 2000-2018**

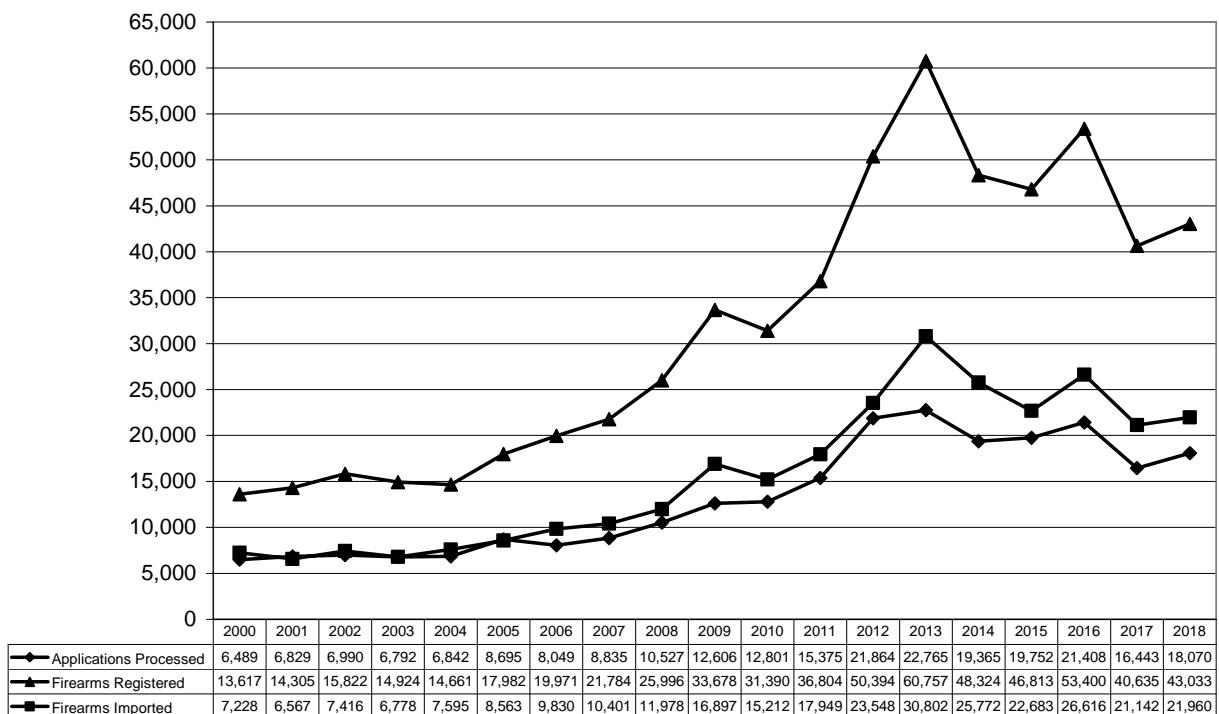
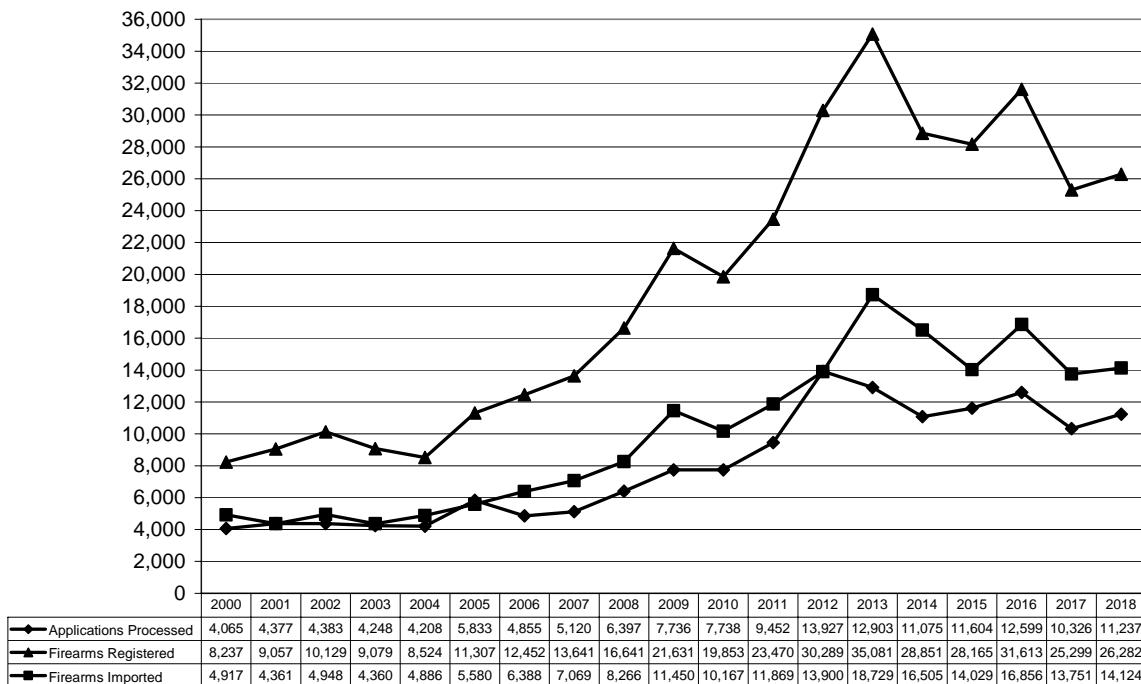


Figure 5 shows that, between 2000 and 2018 in the City and County of Honolulu, the annual tally of permits processed increased 176.4%, the number of firearms annually registered jumped 219.1%, and the number of firearms annually imported climbed 187.2%.

**Figure 5: Firearm Registration Trends,  
City & County of Honolulu, 2000-2018**



As shown in Figure 6, the number of permits processed annually in Hawaii County during the 2000-2018 period rose 209.2%, the number of firearms annually registered increased 194.1%, and the number of firearms annually imported surged 237.1%.

**Figure 6: Firearm Registration Trends,  
Hawaii County, 2000-2018**

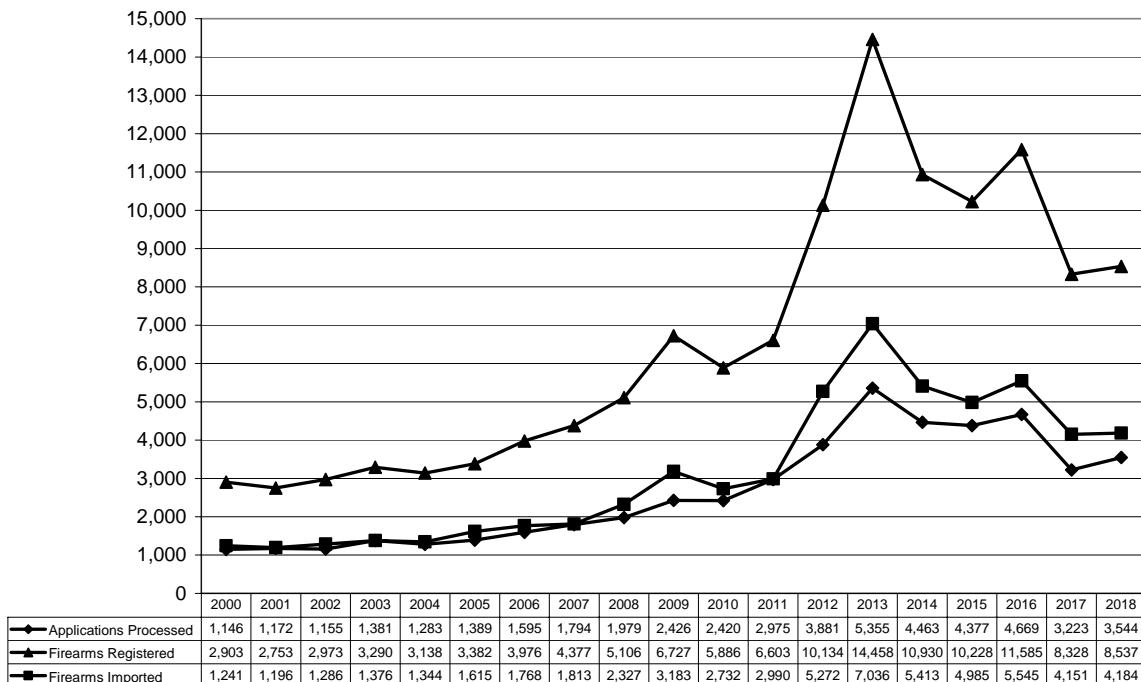
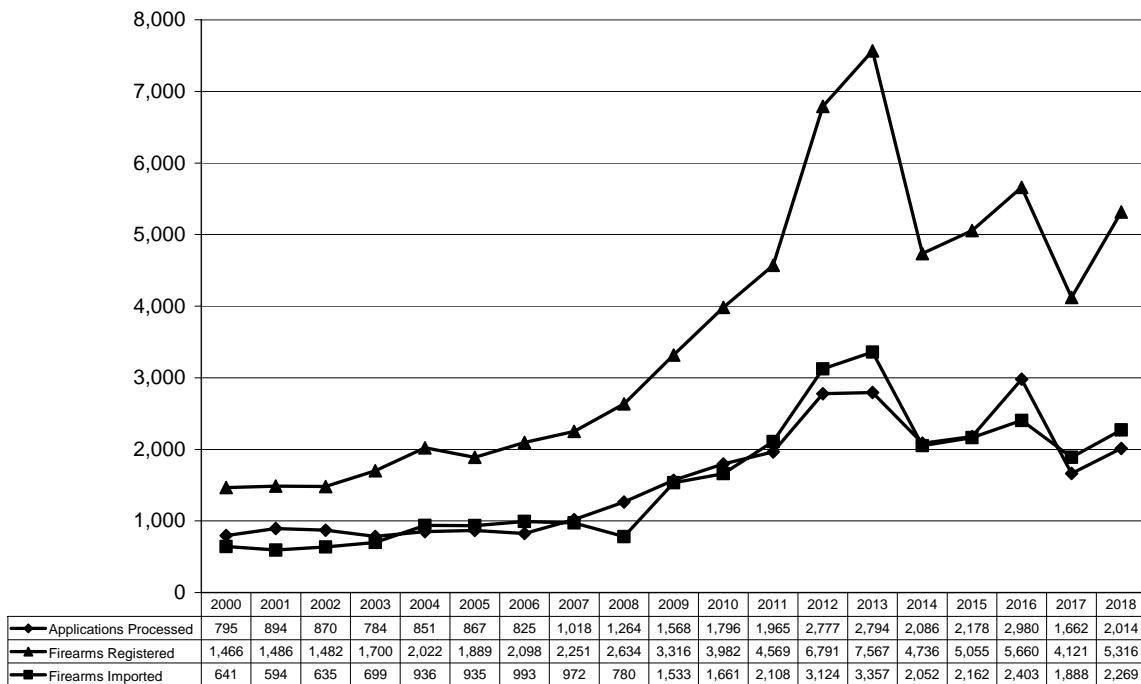


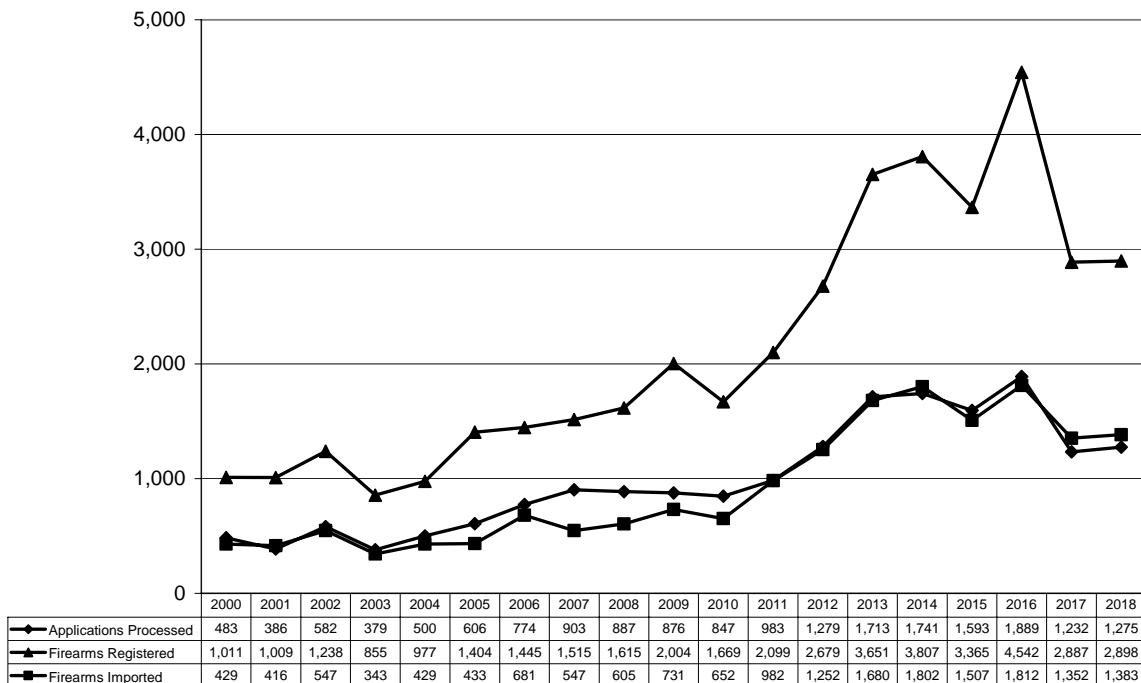
Figure 7 reveals that, between 2000 and 2018 in Maui County, the annual number of permits processed increased 153.3%, the number of firearms annually registered skyrocketed 262.6%, and the tally of firearms annually imported soared 254.0%.

**Figure 7: Firearm Registration Trends,  
Maui County, 2000-2018**



As shown in Figure 8, the number of permits processed annually in Kauai County from 2000 through 2018 increased 164.0%, the number of firearms registered climbed 186.6%, and the number of firearms imported surged 222.4%.

**Figure 8: Firearm Registration Trends,  
Kauai County, 2000-2018**



## Permit Application Denials

As noted earlier, 1.7% (301) of all permit applications in Hawaii during 2018 were denied for cause. The majority of the denials were for longarm (227, or 75.4%) rather than handgun (74, or 24.6%) permit applications. Following a trend since this annual report was first published, longarm permit applications in 2018 were denied at a rate (2.6%) that is more than triple the denial rate for handgun permit applications (0.8%).

Roughly one-quarter (68, or 22.6%) of the denials in 2017 were due to the applicants' prior criminal convictions, while 4.7% (14) were due to pending cases.

It is a misdemeanor in the State of Hawaii to provide falsified information on firearm permit applications, unless the falsified information pertains to criminal or mental health histories, in which case it is a felony offense (HRS § 134-17). In 2018, falsified criminal or mental health information, or both, were provided in 39.2% (118) of the 301 denial cases; falsified information pertaining to anything other than criminal or mental health histories was provided in 4.0% (12) of the cases; and no falsified information was provided in 56.8% (171) of the cases.

Table 2 presents broad categorical data on the reasons for denied permit applications.

**Table 2: Reasons for Denied Firearm Permit Applications, State of Hawaii, 2018**

	#	%*
Mental Health-Related Issue**	163	54.2
"Other" Criminal Offense	89	29.6
Medical Marijuana Patient***	27	9.0
Domestic Violence****	17	5.6
Restraining/Protective Order	12	4.0
Drug Offense	10	3.3
Disqualifying Juvenile Offense	2	0.7

\* Figures do not total 100% due to multiple reasons for some denials.

\*\* Includes adverse mental health diagnoses and treatment, and drug or alcohol abuse/addiction and treatment. Denials for such reasons can be satisfactorily resolved with a verified doctor's note stating that the applicant is no longer adversely affected. While an original denial cannot be appealed or overturned, a new application may be submitted and the appropriate permit will be issued.

\*\*\* Former medical marijuana patients may successfully apply one year after the expiration of their medical marijuana card.

\*\*\*\* Includes domestic violence-related offenses and counseling/treatment.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of information entered into a description field for each denial.

**Table 3: Descriptions of Firearm Permit Application Denials,  
State of Hawaii, 2018**

	301 Total Denials	#	%*
abuse of family/household member		4	1.3
abuse of family/household member + alcohol & substance abuse treatment		1	0.3
abuse of family/household member + harassment		1	0.3
abuse of family/household member + mental health treatment		1	0.3
alcohol abuse treatment		3	1.0
alcohol abuse treatment + mental health issue/treatment		1	0.3
alcohol abuse/addiction		1	0.3
alcohol and substance abuse treatment		1	0.3
anger management treatment		1	0.3
assault		24	8.0
assault + abuse of family/household member		2	0.7
assault + drug offense		1	0.3
assault + mental health issue/treatment		1	0.3
battery		2	0.7
battery + mental health issue/treatment		1	0.3
battery + terroristic threatening		1	0.3
breach of peace		1	0.3
contributing to the delinquency of a minor		1	0.3
disorderly conduct		8	2.7
disqualifying juvenile offense		2	0.7
domestic assault (mainland) + burglary		2	0.7
domestic violence intervention + mental health issue/treatment + substance abuse/addiction		1	0.3
drug offense		2	0.7
drug offense + mental health issue/treatment		2	0.7
drug possession		2	0.7
endangerment		1	0.3
false official statements (disqualifying federal offense)		2	0.7
felonies (unspecified)		1	0.3
felony (unspecified)		7	2.3
felony probation violation		1	0.3
harassment		12	4.0
harassment + medical marijuana patient		1	0.3
medical marijuana patient		26	8.6
mental health issue/treatment		135	44.9
mental health issue/treatment + disorderly conduct		3	1.0
mutual affray		1	0.3
negligent injury + alcohol abuse treatment		1	0.3
no response from California re domestic violence arrest		1	0.3
no response from Florida re trespass arrests		1	0.3
obstruction of justice		1	0.3
positive field test for drugs		2	0.7
prior law enforcement contact/observations		1	0.3
receiving stolen property		1	0.3
resisting arrest		1	0.3
restraining order		12	4.0
robbery		1	0.3
sex offense		2	0.7
stolen goods + burglary tools		2	0.7
substance abuse		2	0.7
substance abuse treatment		3	1.0
substance abuse treatment + mental health issue/treatment		1	0.3
substance abuse/addiction		4	1.3
terroristic threatening		2	0.7
theft		1	0.3
weapons offense		4	1.3
weapons offense + on probation		1	0.3

\* Due to rounding, figures do not total 100%.

## **Licenses to Carry Firearms**

Hawaii's county police departments also process license applications for the carrying of firearms in public. Statewide in 2018, 167 employees of private security firms applied for and were issued carry licenses, and nine (5.1%) were denied. A total of 31 private citizens applied for a carry license in 2018, including 12 in the City and County of Honolulu, 10 in Hawaii County, eight in Kauai County, and one in Maui County; all applicants were denied by the respective county's police chief.

## **Confiscations**

Four "assault pistols," one "short barrel shotgun," and one "short barrel rifle," as defined and prohibited by state law, were confiscated by the firearm registration personnel statewide in 2018.

## **Acknowledgements**

This report was prepared with input and assistance from the county police departments' firearm registration personnel. As the volume of registration activity documented in this report demonstrates, these dedicated professionals work hard to serve their communities.

### Hawaii County Police Department

**Arlene Young**, Senior Police Records Clerk

**Lori Enomoto**, Firearms Registration Clerk

**Michelle Kaaukai-Perreira**, Firearms Registration Clerk

### City and County of Honolulu Police Department

The entire Firearms Registration Section, in particular:

**Suzy Yamasaki**, Firearms Registration Clerk

### Kauai County Police Department

**Scott Yamaguchi**, Weapons Registration Clerk

### Maui County Police Department

**Melanie Wong**, Firearms Registration Clerk

## **Reference**

Bureau of Justice Statistics (November 2017). *Background checks for firearms transfers, 2015: Statistical Tables*. U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs. NCJ 250978.